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Health Department of Northwest Michigan

SAFE in Northern Michigan Named to Blue Ribbon Coalition

SAFE in Northern Michigan is now a Blue Ribbon Coalition, a top credential awarded by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America ([CADCA](#).) The credential is part of a program that recognizes high performing coalitions which do an exceptional job in creating a foundation for their work.

To be chosen, [SAFE](#) had to achieve measurable success in community-level substance misuse-related work. A two-phase application and screening process was used. This year, only 15 coalitions are being given the honor nationwide.

“The youth invigorate us to support their ideas on how to positively influence young people to avoid using drugs and alcohol,” said Nichole Flickema, SAFE in Northern Michigan Project Coordinator and Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) Community Health Coordinator.

“We brainstorm with the youth and then help them create meaningful impacts like putting anti-vaping disposal boxes in their schools and produce public-service announcements on the consequences of under-age drinking and marijuana use prevention,” added Susan Pulaski, SAFE Project Director and HDNW Community Health Supervisor.

SAFE in Northern Michigan exists to prevent youth substance use, increase community awareness, and create change through collaboration, education, prevention initiatives and more. With results as the focus, coalition members from 12 sectors in Antrim, Emmet, and Charlevoix counties include HDNW, Michigan State Police, Harbor Springs City Police, Petoskey Public Safety, Char-Em Intermediate School District, BASES, McLaren Northern Michigan, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Michigan State Extension, and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation. They also work with staff at 10 area schools and sponsors to create youth events that provide substance-free environments.

“We congratulate SAFE in Northern Michigan on their outstanding work and dedication to their community,” said Pat Castillo, CADCA’s VP, Training Operations/Director, National Coalition Institute. “SAFE clearly embraced the CADCA model of prevention and their commitment to creating a foundation for population-level outcomes is an inspiration for others in the field of substance misuse prevention. Our Blue Ribbon Coalitions are excellent examples for other coalitions to be inspired by and emulate in their quest to reduce substance use and misuse in their communities.”

SAFE in Northern Michigan was formed in 2007 after student members of the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation identified substance abuse among youth as their No. 1 concern. Over the years, the coalition has grown to its current three-county reach—Antrim, Emmet, and Charlevoix. It is now mentoring a younger program in Otsego County called [RISE: Otsego Substance Free Coalition](#).

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

To learn more or get involved with SAFE through sponsorship or its events, go to <https://safeinm.com/get-involved/>. You can also sign up to receive a SAFE Newsletter.

Cutlines:

SAFE Youth: Emma Moser (Mancelona High School), Jürgen Griswold (Ellsworth High School), Avery Huston (RISE-Johannesburg High School), Julia Kirby (Mancelona High School), and Bree Bunker (East Jordan High School) display their colors and commitment.

SAFE Adult Leaders: Part of the SAFE Adult Coalition include Susan Pulaski (Heath Department of Northwest Michigan), Nichole Flickema (HDNW), Amy Horstman (HDNW), Randall Koch (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians), Sarah Ford (Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation), Corey Hebner (Michigan State Police), and Tyler Swiss (Harbor Springs Police Department).

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